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Wisconsin Chapter

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Northwest District

2012 Recognition Award Profile

Best Planning Document

The Northwest District annually recognizes outstanding individuals and planning efforts throughout the twenty six counties that make up the district. One award was presented this year.

City of Eau Claire – Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The City of Eau Claire's 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan represents a significant step for the City of Eau Claire in improving the City's pedestrian and bicycling environment. It provides a detailed analysis of the existing conditions with respect to pedestrian and bicycling facilities, and provides specific recommendations for the City to address these deficiencies. The overall objective of the plan is *“Establish bicycling, pedestrian, and other non-motorized travel as a viable, convenient, and safe transportation and recreational choice throughout the City of Eau Claire, which will contribute to the quality of life in Eau Claire, sustainability of the environment, and health of all residents.”* Development of the plan included input from community individuals and organizations having varying interests in pedestrian and bicycle-related issues.

The Plan was prepared by the City's Community Development and Public Works Departments under the direction of the Eau Claire Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC). Preparation of the plan was one of several pedestrian/bicycle-related recommendations contained in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

A variety of recommended actions have taken place since the adoption of the Plan, including:

- All proposed street construction projects (new and reconstructed) are now reviewed by BPAC prior to being forwarded to the City Council for consideration. BPAC provides recommendations related to pedestrian

and bicycle issues and improvements for the street under consideration, and these recommendations are included in the City Engineer's Report to the City Council.

- The City applied for and received Bicycle Friendly Community status at the bronze level from the League of American Bicyclists.
- The City Council adopted a bicycle parking ordinance for new development. The ordinance addresses the general design and placement of bicycle parking facilities, as well as standards for the number of bicycle parking spaces required for a new building.
- The City has added over 2.6 miles of bicycle lanes or sharrows within the City.
- Sponsored educational booths at two City-wide festivals/events including: Downtown Summerfest and the Eau Claire Sustainability Fair. BPAC also sponsored a 10-mile recreational bicycle ride during the Summerfest festival.
- Sponsored a meeting where all bicycle-related organizations in the community were invited to discuss issues and concerns regarding bicycling.
- Sponsored a "field trip" to Madison, WI to meet with pedestrian and bicycle officials from the City and University to discuss issues and facility design.

The plan process also enabled the City to develop several GIS databases, which did not exist before work on the plan was initiated. This information will be used for future planning and projects. Information compiled as background information for the plan included:

- A database that includes all 364 miles of public sidewalk within the City
- An inventory of all bicycle racks within the City
- An inventory of all of the off-street pathways, and on-street bicycle lanes

The adoption of this plan demonstrates the commitment of the City of Eau Claire to provide facilities and programs for pedestrians and bicyclists. Its implementation also sends a strong signal within the community that walking and bicycling are no longer considered as alternative modes of travel, rather are essential components of the City's multi-modal transportation system.

Congratulations to the City of Eau Claire for its Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.